

SPECIAL
AUCTION
CATALOGUE

1812

June 12

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A
CATALOGUE
OF A
SELECT AND SINGULARLY VALUABLE COLLECTION
OF

Paintings,

THE PROPERTY OF A GENTLEMAN OF FORTUNE,
WHOSE TASTE WILL DISPLAY ITSELF IN THE CHOICE OF THE NOBLE
PRODUCTIONS OF THOSE

GREAT MASTERS,

DOMENICHINI,
LEONARDO DA VINCI,
SIR PETER PAUL RUBENS,
NICOLA POUSSIN,

MICHAEL ANG. BUONAROTTI,
CANALETTI,
SPAGNOLETTA,
RAPHAEL, &c.

Which will be Sold by Auction,

BY PETER COXE,

IN MADDOX STREET, HANOVER SQUARE,

On FRIDAY, the 12th of JUNE, 1812, at Two o'Clock precisely.

*May be Viewed Three Days preceding the Sale; when Catalogues may be had, at One
Shilling each, in MADDOX STREET, and at No. 33, THROGMORTON STREET,
ROYAL EXCHANGE.*

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE names of great Masters are so often given to works of a very inferior quality, that the eye is too often surfeited with reading a repetition of high sounding titles, which only occasion disappointment to the spectator, and throw contempt on Art by their injudicious and idle application. It may be said, on the contrary, of the Collection described in this Catalogue, that they “ who run may read:” that the most cursory glance will satisfy the judicious admirer “ whose image and superscription they bear:” while a repetition of examination, it is presumed with confidence, will rivet them more strongly in the esteem of those conversant in the higher order of Art, by the manifestation which will display itself in their superior and self-evident excellence.

A

DESCRIPTIVE CATALOGUE.

FRIDAY, THE TWELFTH OF JUNE.

LOT I. SPAGNOLETTO.

A Spanish Peasant, habited in the Costume of his Country, holding a large Onion in his Hands.

Painted with all that contrast of strong light and deep shadow that was this eminent Painter's prevailing principle of art and great delight.

LOT II. VERNET.

A View on the Mediterranean.

A Sea Port : a small glowing and interesting Picture of this deservedly favourite French Master. A Sunset, with Figures and Shipping.

LOT III. TITIAN.

Venus Rising from the Sea.

The counterpart, in composition, of the celebrated Picture of the same subject at Cleveland House, in the possession of the Marquis of Stafford.

LOT IV. MOUCHERON.

Landscape, with Cattle and Figures.---Evening.

The effect of the rays of the declining Sun is beautifully and naturally described by the gleam of light that spreads over the tender foliage of the groups of trees, and illumines the fore-ground bank. The passage at the turning of the path, with the light tinging the extreme branches of the bushes which form the hedge, and the entrance through the rustic gate, are truly rural. The transparency of the trees upon the brilliant evening sky is well managed; and the distant mountains are melting into air. The Animals are painted with freedom; and the whole scene is so chastely coloured, that we may pronounce this one of the most natural representations of a warm and serene evening that we have seen from the pencil of this admired Landscape Painter.

LOT V. PAUL VERONESE.

A Roman Warrior pleading his Cause before a Magistrate of the Western Empire.

The character not inferior to Titian. The whole Scene is appropriate. The Secretary is employed in taking notes. The attendant Guards stand

perfectly natural; and the Figures listening, and in conversation, are equally characteristic. The architectural back-ground is in perfect harmony of classic representation. There is a suitable tone of grey, but rich, colour pervading the Picture, which proves the Painter worthy of the high rank he attained in the Venetian School.

LOT VI. LUDOVICO CARRACCI.

St. Francis,

Recognised by the Sigma on his hands and feet, is represented in a reclining position, with an Angel supporting him in his last moments. Other Angels, accompanied by a Cherub, are hovering above him, resting on a Cloud, and waiting as if to accompany his departing Spirit into Heaven. The Saint is dressed in the habit of the Order of which he was the Founder. A sober tone of colour pervades the whole Performance, and leaves the mind more at leisure to be impressed solely with the piety of the story.

LOT VII. NICOLO POUSSIN.

A Grand Romantic Landscape.—From the Falconieri Palace.

A species of poetic grandeur pervades the works of this celebrated Painter, which excites our admiration of his original powers. In contemplating the Landscapes of Nicolo Poussin, we are led to feel that every

town is peopled with philosophers; and all his figures, however scattered over his classic scenes, are truly such as Virgil has described. Of this cast is the Goatherd, whose action, as he drives the Animals before him up the rude path, displays an intelligent mind: he is addressing the solitary contemplative figure, who is reposing upon the grassy borders of the still water. The trees in this composition are well designed, the colouring is rich, the effect solemn, and the painting is masterly and bold.

LOT VIII. RAPHAEL.

The Holy Family.—Small Figures.

An Upright:

The Virgin is sitting, and the Infant Saviour is standing in her lap, whose head is irradiated by a crown of glory. St. Lucia, and another female Saint, are attendant on each side of the Virgin. The Serpent, as the great Enemy of Man, is judiciously introduced; the scene in which they are placed is an open and mountainous country. The figure of the Saviour is beautiful and elegant. The faces of the Virgin and Attendants are expressive, and sweetly penciled. The draperies are well arranged in ample folds and rich harmony of colour, and show how attentively this great Master had considered, in his early days, the Works of Pietro Perugino and the great Performances of Leonarda da Vinci, on which he grounded part of his own unrivalled excellence.

LOT IX. MICHAEL ANGELO CARRAVAGIO.

The Saviour crowned with Thorns, and shown to the Jews.

It cannot but appear singular, that a Master who could send from his easel so extraordinary a Performance as this,—whose pencil could be so clear and delicate, and yet so forcible, so luminous, and yet so tranquil, who could contrast beauty of countenance, strong opposition of character devoid of extravagance, and who could spread so irresistible a charm over his subject, uniting mind and judgment with facility and perfection of mechanical execution,—could capriciously have deviated from this sure and resplendent path to fame. This Picture is the perfection of his Art, and the pure soul of Painting. Here is every thing that suits the subject; every thing is in harmony. Pontius Pilate shows the Saviour to the Jews, with the reed placed in his hands in derision, and crowned with thorns. The dignified deportment of the Roman Governor is finely contrasted by the rude and savage conduct of the attendant Executioner, who, with a debased and abject mind, insults the meek and suffering Victim with taunting clamour, as he is rudely stripping the garment from his shoulders: whilst the obedient Soldiers, in the discharge of their duty, remain earnest, but silent spectators. The Painter, with the true pathos of his art, has not harrassed the feelings by an unnecessary display of the bodily sufferings of the Saviour, anticipating the agony he was to suffer upon the Cross; but depicted his patient and pious countenance looking up to Heaven as if he was saying, “Lord, thy will, and not mine, be done.” The Saviour of the human race knew what he was to undergo; he did not debase his character by showing an example of impatience under affliction: he felt

for the human race, and not for himself, and evinced no unbecoming extravagance of deportment. This the Painter seemed to feel, when he accomplished this wonderful performance.

LOT X. CANALETTI.

View of the Church of St. George Maggiore, as seen from the Corner of St. Mark's Square.

Amongst the most pleasing inquiries of an enlightened mind, must be reckoned those which tend to the attainment of a knowledge of the habits, customs, and manners of Foreign Nations: and we feel indebted to all those persons, whether historians, travellers, or artists, whose labours have provided us with the means of gratifying so laudable a pursuit. This extraordinary City of Palaces, rising, as if by magic, out of the waters of the Adriatic, is the admiration of the world. And the accounts from all travellers to this renowned place, have excited a general interest to become acquainted with its pictorial beauties. The numerous fine Works from the pencil of this justly admired Artist have afforded us an intimate knowledge of its grandeur, with which we readily associate our feelings of respect for the illustrious men to whom Venice has given birth. Thus at once raising in our estimation the utility and interesting powers of this topographical branch of art. From the faithful Pictures representative of the architectural beauties of this City we feel almost as well acquainted with every feature thereof as though we were natives of Venice. This Picture, and its Companion, are of the same class with the fine Paintings by this Master that adorn the walls of Buckingham House; Works that were held in the highest esteem by our Sovereign. This composition is grand and pic-

turesque, the perspective is faithfully delineated, the colouring is natural, the effect broad, and the figures and vessels are executed with the most masterly spirit. Indeed the happy combinations of the graphic art in this Picture renders the scene completely illusive.

LOT XI. CANALETTI.

View of the Doge's Palace, seen from St. Mark's Square.

So deceptive is this magnificent mass of buildings, as seen across the water, that we cannot but fancy ourselves upon the spot from whence the Painter made his view. The perspective of the foreground, with the continuity of regular pavement approaching the lofty obelisk, on the side of St. Mark's Palace, leads the eye of the spectator to the waters of the Adriatic, which through the opposite opening is seen to expand its unruffled bosom to the horizon. The various vessels that gayly adorn its surface are disposed with the usual good taste of the Master, whose judgment in the arrangement of vessels, figures, and all the necessary accompaniments of such designs, was above competition. The vessel, with its mast and projecting oars, is finely foreshortened, and aids the effect of the general composition, which is so varied and so truly grand, that it is worthy of being placed as a companion to the View of the Church of St. George Maggiore.

LOT XII. JORDAENS:

The Holy Family:

The Virgin, Saviour, Joseph, and St. John, are described by this forcible and most respected Artist as in the act of devotional singing—

“ Hymning the great Creator.”

This luminous Picture ought to be deemed worthy the pencil of the great Rubens, for clearness of tone as well as richness of colour. The subject is unusually treated. The Sacred Family are employed in the most devout and reverential pursuit that the human mind could possibly conceive. The Painter has introduced his own Portrait and that of his Wife; and it may naturally be supposed, although there is no history of the fact, that the Saviour and St. John are the likenesses of his children; such personifications being admissible liberties in the hands of the great Masters, of which there are numerous examples. The friendship of Rubens for Jordaens, it is well known, was sincere and affectionate; and the Picture presents itself to the spectator of so very brilliant a quality, that it cannot be doubted but the generous hand of Rubens, dictated by a regard for the reputation of his favourite disciple, contributed the additional graces of his own pencil, to give animation to the likeness of Jordaens, and resplendent beauty on the head of the Saviour.

LOT XIII. SIR PETER PAUL RUBENS.

Diana returning from the Chase.

The Goddess of the Chase is represented in this fine Picture returning from the field at the head of her Nymphs, each of whom is armed with a spear: one is bearing upon her shoulder a hare, another is caressing a dog, whilst Silenus is eyeing the chaste Goddess, and the rosy children are stealing the grapes, which in luxuriant bunches he is bearing before him. This was a favourite subject with the great Flemish Painter, in which he delighted to display his knowledge of colouring the naked figure: and, in the instance before us, his talent for splendour of effect is strongly manifested. This Picture is from the celebrated Collection of the late Duke of Orleans.

LOT XIV. NICOLÒ POUSSIN:

The Plague of Ashdod.

The subject of this noble work of art is taken from the sacred Scriptures, and is descriptive of the Plague that the offended God of the Israelites visited upon the Philistine city of Ashdod. The moment selected by the Painter is that when the idolatrous inhabitants of the city assembled to offer their morning sacrifice to the idol, Dagon.—“And when they of Ashdod arose early on the morrow, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the earth, before the Ark of the Lord.”—“And the head of Dagon, and

both the palms of his hands, were cut off upon the threshold; only the stump of Dagon was left to him.”—“ But the hand of the Lord was heavy upon them of Ashdod, and he destroyed them, and smote them with emerods.”

The awfulness of this scene of woe is here pourtrayed with circumstances so naturally arising out of the spreading calamity, that were we not acquainted with the inventive powers of the mind of such a Painter as Poussin, we should conclude the imagery must have been collected by one who had witnessed the horrors of a populous city devastated by a plague. The feelings excited in contemplating this affecting picture, are suited to the subject, which is recorded in that book where all that is described is sublime. The buildings bespeak this to be a city of note—its inhabitants are such as accord with our notions of the people of that age—all the composition is remote from modern times. The high priest is represented in consternation on discovering the fallen idol; and the surrounding witnesses exhibit astonishment and terror at the catastrophe. The utmost pathos of the art is displayed in the group upon the foreground of the picture, wherein we behold a mother dead of the fatal disease, with one infant breathless by her side; and another, though living, yet unconscious of its misfortune, in the act of endeavouring to excite the maternal attention to its wants; whilst a man is humanely engaged, at the risk of his own safety, in separating the innocent victim from its danger. Indeed there is not a figure, nor an incident, in the composition, but tends to the developement of the story recorded by this extraordinary epic Picture.

The figures are drawn with classic elegance, the draperies are finely designed, the effect is solemn, and the colouring accords with the general sentiment of the subject.

This Picture, which is from the Collection at the Colonna Palace, was held in high estimation upon the Continent, and is mentioned by Felibien as one of the finest works of Nicolo Poussin.

LOT XV. LEONARDI DA VINCI.

Portrait of a Female.

Beauty, united with expression, which so eminently characterise the fine faces of the Italian women, is happily delineated in the countenance of this Portrait. The drawing of which, together with the neck and hands, is correct and chaste, the chiaro oscura bold, the colouring rich and harmonious, and the execution, though highly finished, is masterly. The Works of this extraordinary and accomplished man are scarce, and deservedly held in high repute. This Picture was brought to England from Milan some years ago, and has remained in the Collection in which it was then placed to the present period.

LOT XVI. DOMENICHINO.

Saint Sebastian.

The utmost knowledge of the contour of the human form is manifested by this great artist. In the design of this elegant figure, whose soul, amidst the agony of his corporeal sufferings, seems suddenly elevated by observing the heavenly messengers, bearing the symbols of reward for his holy zeal. There is a grandeur in the conception of this subject, worthy of the great mind of Domenichino, whose severe style diffuse dignity to the graphic art. The composition is of the highest order of painting; that simplicity of style which delights in breadth of effect and solemnity of colour, disdaining metrical ornament, is here exhibited to the intelligent mind in its fullest power. These elevated subjects, when treated by men of inferior abilities,

produce sentiments of disgust; but in the hands of a Domenichino, raise none but those which exalt the human mind. The buildings, the landscape, and the whole of this fine composition, are of the highest order of merit.

LOT XVII. MICHAEL ANGELO BUONAROTTI.

Leda.

This celebrated Picture, which shows the grandeur of this great Master's idea of the human figure, attached to gracefulness of form, long remained the principal ornament of the late Earl Spencer's drawing room, at his Seat at Wimbledon, in Surrey, and was subsequently a highly valued treasure in the Collection of that accurate judge of art Sir Joshua Reynolds, in whose house it remained at his death. The memorable words of this illustrious Painter, in his last public address to the pupils of the Royal Academy, evince his decided reverence for the talents of this great Master of the Italian School.

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